

JUNE 30, 1988

About midway up the coast of Maine is Mt. Desert Island, or Bar Harbor. Most of this island and a few adjoining ones are what make the 35,00 or so acres that are Acadia National Park.

On the outer shores, the Atlantic Ocean sends waves crashing into the deeply pitted rock shelves and scraggly cliffs.

Cape Cod to the South and Nova Scotia to the North form a protective area that is called the Gulf of Maine. Cape Cod juts far enough out into the ocean to divert the warm gulf currents, thus causing the water to stay extremely cold and produce better fishing conditions. The ocean temperature, I was told, never rises above 55 degrees F.

Municipal water supplies stay below 50 degrees, too. Every night at the hotel, I mix 100 parts of hot water to one part cold to be able to sit in a tub. Water that frigid in the Shortgrass Country is called ice. All I can find out about the winters is that it drops down to 40 below. I complained to a waiter about my soup being lukewarm, and he thought I was dissatisfied with the seasoning.

One thing I have learned from the park rangers is that gulls have grown so thick on the islands that a government agency is poisoning them.

Had I been willing to take the chance of blowing my cover, I could have given the ranger some first hand information on what happens to folks who try to control predators or any kind of pests, including the names and addresses of the organizations to avoid. In fact, if I had been foolish enough to talk, I could have told her she'd better forewarn those gull eradicators of their certain fate, or she'd be seeing them standing up on their tiptoes too high to ever reach down again to put out any gull baits.

On clear mornings I walk along the trails leading down to the tidal pools and wait for the tides to bring more excitement. Hundreds of gulls swoop in and out, never aware of their enemies. I need to weigh gull control against coyote control. We may need to point out a hypocrisy, or a double standard.